

	<i>scapularis</i>	<i>viridis</i>	<i>micromelaena</i>	<i>aequanimis</i>	<i>djungkulanensis</i>
Chasen & Kloss <sup>5</sup> : (8♀)	59-63				
	60.63				
Tail:	43.5-48.5	45.5-47	46.5-50	44	48-53
	46.60	46.25	48.70		50
Chasen & Kloss <sup>5</sup> : (8♀)	45-50				
	49.25				
Culmen:	11-15	13-14	14.5-15.5	15	12-14.5
	13	13.38	15		13.13

## References:

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3. Hall, Mrs. B. P. The taxonomic importance of variation in non-breeding plumage in *Aegithina tiphia* and *A. nigrolutea*. *The Ibis*, 99, 1957, pp. 143-156.
4. Hoogerwerf, A. Over een tot nu toe voor Java onbekende vorm van *Aegithina tiphia*, *Ardea*, 37, 1950, p. 186-7.
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## A wild-shot Wigeon x European Green-winged Teal

(Exhibited to the B.O.C., March, 1962)

by JAMES M. HARRISON

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On 2nd December, 1961 a duck was shot on Hayling Island, Hampshire, and was at once recognised by Mr. D. R. Pycroft as a hybrid between a Wigeon, *Anas penelope* Linnaeus and a European Green-winged Teal, *Anas crecca crecca*, Linnaeus. The bird was a drake.

This is an instance of interspecific hybridisation in which the progeny may be described as strictly intermediate between the parent species in so far as colour and pattern are concerned. However, in size this individual approaches that of a Wigeon, being almost as large as some of the smaller sized ducks of that species. As can be seen from the accompanying plates, the head is predominantly that of a drake Teal, but the rather rich chestnut of that species is replaced by a lighter shade of bay and the pattern, although very close, is not quite faithful, for the light anterior line which runs from above and in front of the eye to demarcate the base of the bill and continue below to form a light border to the dusky chin patch is vestigial and does not extend to enclose the patch, as in most specimens, while this latter character is more extensive. The green surrounding the eyes and extending backwards to the nape is also lighter.

The breast shield is of the same vinaceous colour as in the Wigeon and is markedly spotted. As a variant both a spotted and a barred breast shield have been recorded in that species (Harrison 1956, 1957) while, of course, spotting of the breast in the Teal is invariable.

The rest of the underparts are white as in both species while the black

tail-coverts are bordered very narrowly by the palest buffy-yellow. This character again shows a strict intermediacy.

The flanks are closely vermiculated dusky-grey and white. The specimen lacks the blackish vertical lines embracing the root of the tail as seen in the Teal and there is the merest trace of pale buffy wash in this situation.

The upper tail-coverts are variegated buff-edged sepia; the rectrices pale sepia narrowly edged greyish-white. The central pair are slightly elongated but far less so than in the Wigeon.



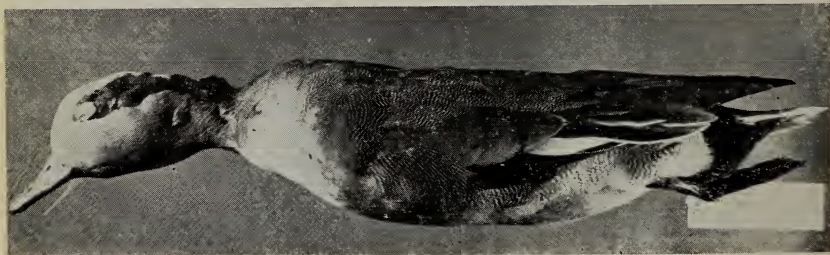
Wigeon X Teal Hybrid. Ventral view.

*Note:* The pallor on the crown and on the sides of the head is due to reflection, not to colour (see description).



Wigeon X Teal Hybrid. Dorsal view.

*Note:* The pallor of the crown is due to reflection and not to colour, (see text description)



Wigeon X Teal Hybrid. Lateral view.

*Note:* The pallor of the sides of head is due to reflection and not to colour, (see text description).

The wing characters are of interest, the smallest coverts are a dusky grey, the medium coverts become paler, while the greater coverts are paler still. Immediately above the speculum which is bright bottle-green as in the Teal, there is a broad wedge-shaped dark slate-grey marking, and the lower edge, as also that of the major coverts is narrowly edged with bay. The lower border of the speculum is a bluish-black wedge-shaped band. The innermost scapulars are dusky grey, edged paler grey; the next proximal grey with broad black outer vanes narrowly edged with white which, near the tips, becomes bay. The ultimate series near the speculum, in the folded wing are of a light pearl-grey, with rather broad black borders and with thin whitish edges.

The hybrid also lacks the buffy-yellow inner-most scapulars of the Teal but has the long black and white scapulars of the Wigeon as can be seen from the lateral view of the specimen.

Measurements in mms.:

Averages: (to the nearest decimal,  
six measured)

	<i>Hybrid ♂</i>	<i>Wigeon ♂</i>	<i>Teal ♂</i>
wing	222	262	183.5
bill length	37	34.7	36
width at nostrils	14.5	15.3	12
depth at nostrils	13.5	14	12.5
nail	7	8.8	7
tarsus	35.5	38.5	29
middle toe with claw	48	48.6	38
tail	84	99.8	68

These measurements demonstrate intermediacy.

To summarise, the overall picture of this bird is that of a first winter drake Wigeon with the head and neck of a Teal.

Mr. Peter Olney, to whom the viscera were sent, reported that the bird had been feeding as do Wigeon, *i.e.* grazing and actually during the preparation of the specimen it was noted as having the same strong smell of that species and, as already stated, it was associating with Wigeon when shot. Unfortunately the stomach was virtually empty but Mr. Olney reports that there were a few traces of grass, mostly leaf.

### DISCUSSION

Much study of hybridisation is needed to disclose fully the underlying principles involved. One must also reflect on the curious "bridling" of the face, though absent in this specimen, which is produced at times by various interspecific duck crosses, notably those in which Shoveler, Wigeon and Teal are parental, and more particularly that same pattern in the Teal in the absence of any evidence of hybridisation. This condition is ascribed by the writer to autophoric reverse mutation (1953).

One of the most difficult points to decide when assessing a duck hybrid of which the parentage is unknown is that of hazarding a guess as to which



way the cross went. The writer at present knows of no certain way, though the tendency is always to presume that the predominant characters, if the specimen is a male as this one is, are attributable to the male parent; this need not necessarily be so. Hybridisation demonstrates a degree of pleomorphism; this is exemplified by two Common Pochard, *Aythya ferina* (Linnaeus) x Tufted Duck, *A. fuligula* (Linnaeus) hybrids, both predominantly Tufted Duck in appearance, despite the fact that the male parent was known to be the former species, as they were bred in captivity and are now in my collection. This same interspecific cross has recently (1961) given rise (it is believed) to individuals resembling, among other species, the Lesser Scaup, *A. affinis* (Eyton). The biological laws determining such issues are certainly obscure. Referring once more to the bridled facial pattern: it has been met with in the Teal x Shoveler, Teal x Mallard, Shoveler x Wigeon, Pintail x Teal, Pintail x American Green-winged Teal and yet the character is lacking in this present cross, while as already stated, it can appear apparently in the absence of hybridisation in the European Green-winged Teal.

Similarly the age of the individual is by no means always easy to determine. In the present specimen the wing-coverts are greyish and call to mind those of a first winter Wigeon. Had the bird been obtained in an adult phase (it is presumed that this bird is a first winter individual) with white shoulders, it would have presented a very anomalous appearance, and it would have been even more difficult to appraise the proportionate values as to parentage of (1) the characters of the head and neck which are predominantly Teal and (2) the wing characters which would, under those circumstances, have been predominantly Wigeon.

Clearly there is still very much to be learned from a close study of such cases and, in this connection birds of known age and parentage will obviously provide some of the answers.

Such cases in captivity will also provide other evidence in the characters of the courtship, feeding habits, voice, etc. Also of course, successive plumages of such hybrids, including the eclipse plumage, will also no doubt offer some clues as to the pattern such hybrid individuals will follow.

While these remarks concern the external morphology and merely touch on the possible behavioural modifications, there is still left the whole field of anatomical features such as the osteology and enterology, as well as the important characters presented by the structural changes of the syrinx. Communications have already appeared in the literature on these important aspects of hybrids which in the past have too often been regarded as of little value and, in fact, as specimens to be avoided at any cost.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due to Mr. D. R. Pycroft for presenting this interesting specimen to me. To Mr. Peter Olney of The Wildfowl Trust, for his opinion as to its feeding habits, and to Dr. Jeffery Harrison for comments and suggestions.

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## The status of *Centropus toulou wahlbergi* C. Grant

by MICHAEL P. STUART IRWIN

Received 13th March, 1962

*Centropus toulou wahlbergi* C. Grant, *Bull. B.O.C.* 35, 1915, p. 99, with type locality Umslango, Port Natal = Umhlanga Rocks, Durban, is generally recognised as representing an endemic South African race of this widely distributed Indo-African and Malagasy coucal, and is so recognised by Peters (1940), (who provisionally referred Transvaal birds to this race), Roberts (1940), Vincent (1952), Clancey (1953), McLachlan and Liversidge (1957), Smithers *et al.* (1957) and Mackworth-Praed and Grant (1962).

In the course of a joint study undertaken with Mr. C. W. Benson and Mr. C. M. N. White into rifts and river valleys as zoogeographical barriers in South-Central and East Africa, (Benson, Irwin and White in press), the status of the populations of this highly localised species were investigated, as *C. t. wahlbergi* was more or less generally supposed to reach its distributional limit on the northern edge of the Mashonaland plateau.

Generally speaking this coucal is poorly represented in collections. However, it has been possible to assemble some 22 skins, consisting of all housed in the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia; the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria (kindly loaned through Mr. O. P. M. Prozesky) and in the Museu Dr. Alvaro de Castro, Lourenço Marques. I have also been able to examine material recently collected by Major Melvin Traylor for the Chicago Natural History Museum. Of the total number of specimens available, only those in adult breeding dress have been of use for taxonomic purposes. This series comprises a female in non-breeding dress and an immature male from Lake Rukwa, Tanganyika Territory; three breeding dress males and three similarly plumaged females from Northern Rhodesia, plus a male and female in non-breeding dress and one juvenile female from that Territory. From Southern Rhodesia there are two females in breeding dress from Mashonaland; from Nyasaland a male and two females in breeding dress; and from Ngamiland in the northern Bechuanaland Protectorate I have seen a recently collected pair in breeding dress. Unfortunately the only South African material available comprises an adult male in breeding dress from Roodeval in the Transvaal and a juvenile male from northern Zululand; in addition a single adult breeding plumaged female has been examined from extreme southern Portuguese East Africa. A female in breeding dress from Sokotu in Nigeria has also been available for comparison.

The original description of *C. t. wahlbergi* was based on an unsexed bird in breeding dress, stated to differ from *Centropus toulou grillii* Hartlaub, *J.f.O.* 9, 1861: p. 13, Gabon, by having the entire head, except the ear-coverts, glossy blue-black, without the green sheen, but of not quite so deep a blue as is shown in the type of *Centropus toulou caeruleiceps* Neumann, *J.f.O.* 52, 1904; p. 380, Lake Abaya, Abyssinia, but with the blue of the head sharply defined, not merging gradually into the colour of